WEB GUIDELINES FOR CONTENT PROVIDERS

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PURPOSE: The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that content providers work in concert with systems administrators to provide the best possible presentation of content from the Treasury community. Content providers may decide (based on an anticipated return on investment) to implement and operate their own web sites. New web sites become official when the Treasury web site links to it. The Treasury web site will link to new sites that comply with the Web Business Practices, the Web Quality Process, the Web Style Guide for Administrators, and the Web Guidelines for Content Providers. All roles and responsibilities described in the Web Style Guide for Administrators are now added to those of the content provider.

AUDIENCE: To make web presentations useful to a wide range of customers, it is important to keep in mind the audience composition. While web statistics vary and cannot always distinguish users from the naming conventions used, in general, this breaks down as follows:

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Business community.................... 40 to 50 percent
Educational community........................ 12 percent
Government.......................................... 6 percent
Other.......................................42 to 32 percent
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The most common connection speeds are at the rate of 14.4 or 28.8 kilobytes per second. The most common browsers currently are Netscape, Mosaic, and the Explorer. Text-only options should be implemented to allow access to a greater number of users, including Americans with disabilities.

FILE FORMAT: Be sure to convert all information to a suitable electronic format. Review the Web Style Guide for Administrators. Offices and bureaus that utilize the Treasury server or a section of another server in the Treasury community should keep in mind that the more closely files conform to the Web Style Guide, the faster the information will appear on the web. The most important of these are repeated here:

> **CONTENT:** The appearance of your web presentation is very important, but content is even more important. Content must be kept current. The user will not come back, if there is nothing of substance on your web pages.

> **LANGUAGE:** Use language that is correct, understandable, positive, and concise.

> **IMAGE:** The appearance and content of your web pages reflect on your organization and the Treasury community. Review all new content to make sure it is releasable to the intended audience. Review it for appearance as your office would regarding all publishing.

> **GRAPHICS:** Use graphics to illustrate concepts relevant to the information on your page. Provide the smallest graphic possible to illustrate the concept. If desired, provide an option to view a larger image for greater scrutiny. Minimize access time always. Warn the audience, if a link leads to a large image. Include alternate text for each image where possible. Obtain permission for using graphics originated by another site. When possible, use graphical bullets, rather than graphical divider bars. Use a white background when possible (Colored brochures are an exception). Preview your graphics on several hardware and browser combinations to reach most of your audience.

> **COMMENTS:** Provide at least one E-mail address for comments (from the customer) for every functional area. Designate someone to file, forward, and respond to the comments.

PAGE DESIGN: Provide an overview of the page(s) designed and transfer all

files and the overview to the systems administrator. Contact the Office of Telecommunications Management for the name of the appropriate systems administrator and contractor support with page design. Assistance with page design may also be provided by your graphics organization.

UPDATING EXISTING PAGES: Retain the same file name for changes. Use existing naming conventions for new files.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: A content provider owns the content provided. This provides benefits and certain responsibilities. Content providers are responsible for access statistics, quality, currency, and responsiveness regarding the content. This means reviewing the quality before and after submission, reviewing the content for currency, and responding to the comments received on the content. Interactive content may involve programming and security/privacy measures.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT: Performance measures that could be used to evaluate the value and business case of a web site include, but are not limited to, the following:

> Internal value (business case) to the Government:
>> Increased revenue,
>> Costs avoided,
>> Time savings,
>> Other benefits.

> External value to the Public:
>> The number of accesses,
>> The number of positive E-Mail comments,
>> The number of positive news articles, awards, or other media coverage.

These measures are examples only.   Each new content provider must develop their own business case and measurements appropriate to the particular content area under consideration.